



George Washington & Jefferson National Forests
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**USDA SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROJECTS
FOR FOREST ROADS MAINTENANCE AND ASSOCIATED WATERSHED
AND ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION**

ROANOKE, VA –The George Washington & Jefferson National Forests received funding for two projects through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The projects for road maintenance and associated watershed restoration were announced by USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack on June 2, 2009. Nationally, 106 projects located on National Forest System lands in 31 states received more than \$228 million.

“These road maintenance projects will provide for public health and safety, resource protection, and access to lands in the national forests,” said Vilsack. “The rehabilitation of roads will improve water quality by reducing sediments in nearby streams and help restore natural resources and habitat for fish in areas impacted by deterioration and erosion of road surfaces.”

The funding provides \$440,000 to construct six “arches” and replace four culverts located on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests within Alleghany, Bath, Page and Shenandoah Counties. An arch is a large culvert allowing passage of fish and other aquatic life within the stream while providing safe public transportation on the road above. An additional \$300,000 will fund repaving the parking lot at Cascades Day Use Area near Blacksburg, Va. The existing parking area is extensively damaged due to heavy visitor use. These improvements will restore natural ecosystem of streams, improve water quality, and benefit public safety. The work will be contracted to private companies.

“I am pleased that the Forest Service will be using ARRA funds for these projects in the 6th Congressional District,” said Representative Bob Goodlatte. “The roads in our national forest system are in dire need of maintenance and repair. These projects will ensure that the Forest Service is able to provide a clean, safe water supply while at the same time allowing local residents to enjoy a full range of activities in our national forests.”

Nationally, the Forest Service manages almost 370,000 miles of road and 143,000 miles of trails on the 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands. The George Washington & Jefferson National Forests manages over 4,700 miles of road and 2,000 miles of trail on 1.8 million acres in Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky. The Forest Service transportation system is critical to local and regional economies and is a key element in supporting businesses and activities occurring within or adjacent to national forest lands. Forest Service roads provide Americans access to national forests for their livelihoods and enjoyment. A safe and well-managed system of roads protects water quality and allows citizens to participate in hiking, touring, wildlife viewing, fishing, camping, hunting, boating, and many other outdoor activities.

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The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.